

/18 cont. /

854 for this reason the hammock is made of agave fiber, which re-
863 sists rot, and although a child of a year may still wet the bed, it is usual by the time he reaches this age, and even before, for him to have the habit of cleanliness formed and this problem not to exist, because of previous training. It may be that the child is helped in this by the hot and dry climate of the region, by the reduced quantity of liquid he absorbs during the day, by the physiological phenomenon of perspiration which causes much elimination, and because the mother rises early, at daybreak, and calls the child to his organic necessities, a custom which in time forms a habit, so keeping him dry in bed. /19/

854 When the small family lives apart, especially from the wife's relatives, the rearing and initial training of the children is limited to its members and their maids and female bond servants and slaves if there are any. This training is mainly simple and personal and consists in regulating his daily and nightly feeding, sleep, cleanliness, and beginning to crawl and walk. As the culmination of his preliminary training comes speech.

In this early teaching the average poorer mother plays the main role, as only the better-off mother has the advantage of help from female bond servants, slaves, and servants or wet nurses. We have already seen how the mother carries out these duties or how they are equally fulfilled by whoever assists her.

When she has to go out she leaves the child in the care of her husband, who, following the instructions he receives, feeds the child, watches its cleanliness, its rest, and safety according to customary patterns. At other times the older brothers and sisters have this duty.

[595] If several women live together with a man, it is not unusual that during the absence of one, the others will take care of her children and take her place in protecting and caring for them whether the child is tiny or older. This practice, naturally, occurs only when there is no ill will or hatred between the various co-wives.

[596] When the family life is lived within the maternal family grouping, or when two sisters are co-wives and live in the same

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583 Permanent marriages take place generally between women of
177 standing and whites of recognized influence, and they are more
stable. The conduct of the woman and her relatives is in accord
with the rank of her husband, and he on his part maintains toward
his wife a certain courtesy and gives her the good treatment she
deserves as a person of high status. In these cases it is not unusual
that the woman has been bought in accord with Guajiro legal
tradition and that the marriage lasts; but frequently it is ratified
later in the Catholic church, or both forms were used from the
first moment.

177 It is possible, also, that the white man, following Guajiro
585 custom and in spite of his Catholic marriage, has other wives of
849 lower status than the first, who always keeps the rank of legitimate
wife in our sense and on whom depends the social representation
of the children, the only heirs of the father and of the home,
legal center of the family. The other women, although bought
according to Guajiro law, acquire more or less the rank of con-
cubines in our culture, and their children, the position of ille-
gitimate ones. Catholic missionary influence and relations with
whites have made the Indian come to regard his form of marriage
as a little immoral. For this reason they now say when speaking
of a Guajiro woman married with the rites of their culture: "She
is So-and-so's woman," and the woman who has been married by
Catholic rite says: "I am So-and-so's wife." Thus when one asks
a Guajiro woman, for example, "Where is your husband?", one
must be careful to use the right word for husband /marido/ or
spouse /esposo/, using the first word in the case of a marriage
according to peninsula rites and the second in the case of a
Catholic marriage, the word "marido" being considered offensive
when improperly used. As a consequence of this fact, the concept
of legitimate and illegitimate children has sprung up, a concept
which has no place in primitive Guajiro law. A child even though
born as the result of illicit relations is a child without adjectives,
either of scorn or contempt. In such cases the mother has received
by force through her relatives the payment for her abuse and the

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177 birth in such a way that they are never placed outside the pale of
695 the law. This may be due to the uterine line of kinship in which
848 the father does not count in the recognition of children.

In these cases of marriage between whites and Guajiro women there also occurs a union of these two ideas. The white man refuses to buy the woman or legitimize their union through the [583] necessary traditional proceedings demanded by her culture. The refusal to comply with the main traditional requisite makes the man unacceptable, and he is considered an intruder.

The children, illegitimate /94/ according to the paternal mentality, meet a natural reluctance among their mother's relatives, who however in the long run have to accept them.

582 Consanguineous marriage. Although the Guajiro community is in an obvious process of disintegration, there is a characteristic which is strongly maintained: exogamy, which, at the present time, does not mean the prohibition of marriage within the same clan group, but within a limited circle of close consanguineous kin: brothers /and sisters, hermanos/, uncles /and aunts, tíos/, and ascendants in the female line. Thus today in La Guajira we find marriages between individuals of the same clan, since the tie has weakened so much that although they belong to the same clan group, they do not consider themselves relatives.

If the marriage takes place within the small family circle, the opinion of society and of the relatives is never favorable. They cannot explain why nor wish to accept that an individual should marry a consanguineal kin included among those just mentioned. Their magical beliefs reinforce this, because these beliefs establish the prohibition that a man must not marry a relative, or he will be come bald.

582 Guajiro mentality cannot accept as natural the marriage of
598 a woman to her maternal uncle. This would be incest at its worst, because the maternal uncle has the position that a father has with us. There was a case, and a similar attitude has always been observed in like cases, of a Guajiro girl who had sexual relations with her maternal uncle. After pregnancy became

/96 cont. /

583 which legally belonged to her consanguineous relatives. With this refusal to pay, he has destroyed the standing of the woman, since it is the size of the payment which fixes this, and this denominator of her family now does not exist. This lowers her consanguineous relatives, the bitterest insult to the Indian, for whom the conservation of prestige, its strengthening and increase, is a permanent concern and a rule of life. It puts them in the position of a weak group in which their daughter has been abducted without having received the corresponding payment. They await a similar situation for the descendants of the couple since they, with only the backing of their father and mother, must face all hazards that present themselves, without counting on the economic and social help of their relatives.

595 Furthermore, although the man may marry in the Catholic church, this does not mean for the woman that her husband is going to be monogamous, because he will live as suits him best, buying all the other wives he wants according to the peninsula system, without taking into account that the first marriage prohibits him from having other women.

583 Catholic marriage, which presents itself as one of the best
177 ways to achieve the acculturation of the Indians, his passage to civilization, and his definitive incorporation into Colombian life is now beginning to be gradually accepted and in this way is breaking down the old matrilineal clan organization. It contains various outstanding facts which radically transform the traditional customs. We shall see some of these:

a) The preparation of the home, which in the traditional Guajiro marriage is the woman's responsibility, in the Catholic marriage is entirely the man's, even to the house itself. We know that the payment which the man gives for his wife is made so that the wife and her maternal relatives can take over these /domestic/ obligations. There being no such payment in many Catholic marriages, the man must necessarily, and in fact does, build his own house as soon as possible and must have it adequately furnished with all the household goods necessary for domestic life.

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591 woman and the collaboration of the children, establishes a new home in the settlement of the husband's parents, where they remain until the home is broken up by the death of one of the couple. If it is the man who dies, the woman and the children go back again to the side of the maternal grandmother; if it is the woman, the man remains in his settlement, but the children return to the lands of the maternal clan, to which they belong according to the principle of uterine descent. The same thing happens if both parents die.

So much for the traditional Guajiro system. But in recent times, due to the influence of the mestizo and that of acculturation, the situation has changed. Among the mestizos it is very common for the man to take his wife to his parent's home so that his mother may show her and instruct her in domestic tasks. Presumably, this residence is also influenced by the marriage payment /or rather its lack/, since when the woman has not been acquired in accordance with Guajiro law, the support of the home falls entirely to the lot of the man. Then the help that he may receive will come exclusively from his parents, and this is exactly what determines the patrilocality in these cases.

After a time, if the economic situation of the husband is good, a dwelling is built next to that of his parents, the initiative and construction of this dwelling usually being the responsibility of the man's father. It is frequent, however, that due to particular circumstances of the family, their living all together is prolonged indefinitely.

595 This residence in both cases refers to marriage to the first
591 wife, since the later wives go on living usually in their parents' homes. At most, in these cases of polygamy, various wives may live together in one house, particularly when they are sisters or get on well together. With the death of each one of the wives, the family begins to break up in the manner previously described.

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591 In the case of the marriage of a Guajiro woman with a civilizado, they may respect the matrilocal tradition or establish

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833 general rule of giving herself up docilely as an instrument of pleasure to her husband in order to gain dominance over him and to gradually succeed in replacing the previous wife.

All these considerations impel the woman to make use of her sex appeal in the marriage in order to maintain her ascendancy over her husband and avoid at all cost that he should buy another woman who would cause her to lose her importance and her initial dominance. And it is also for this that she tries as far as lies in her power to retain the real source of her attractiveness and makes use of medicinal herbs or submits to a series of magic rituals designed to preserve her physical attractiveness and to prevent maternity to the point of making it impossible.

[513] Although the Guajiro is passionately attached to the woman who gives him greatest /sexual/ satisfaction, he does not fail to recognize and highly prize other qualities, especially when he is about to buy his first wife. The reason for this lies in the fact that she, and not the others, will represent him socially on all occasions of collective life.

Conjugal relations of a couple who are pure Indian are carried out openly without precautions against the presence of outsiders -- either at home or in the fields -- even in front of the smaller children, /107/ who from a tender age are accustomed to see calmly these biological acts.

If the woman gives way to the will of her husband who claims satisfaction at any time or place, she expects on her part a satisfaction of her own desires, to which the man accedes if possible for fear of adultery on the wife's part, which would lower his prestige.

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833 The Guajiro is accustomed to live close to the woman or women whom he most desires, or to visit them frequently and spend long periods at their side. During these periods the other co-wives show jealousy or find opportunities for infidelity. Since in a way the husband's prestige rests on doing so, the Guajiro goes from one place to another cohabiting with his women without taking heed of his excesses as he thinks that this

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595 is clear proof of his manliness, that it gives him greater
833 physical strength and better development of his masculine functions, a very important aspect this as it corresponds to the Guajiro ideal of a man.

When special circumstances force him to be absent from his women for more than three days, it is not rare that he will suddenly abandon his work, and although he may have to walk a long distance or make big sacrifices, he will go off to his favorite wife. She, knowing that the man wants her and that she has been chosen from among all the others to satisfy him, does her utmost to please him and thus once again assure her superior position over the other co-wives and eliminate them from her husband's life in a permanent and hidden struggle against polygamy.

833 The biological act in married couples has no formal limits, but when it is a matter of illicit relations the woman does not permit any deviation from the normal, going as far as not to permit the man seeing her body as she considers that by doing so she becomes a toy or plaything, a mere instrument of pleasure, like an animal, shameless and without any sense of dignity. For this reason she keeps still and absolutely quiet as she does not want the man in one of his frequent drunken sprees to hold her up to ridicule. Also because /she thinks doing otherwise might cause him to/ classify her as one of the slaves who cannot in view of their status offer any resistance to the demands of their owners.

It must be observed that if it is true that the married woman lends herself to the caprices of her husband for the reasons noted, it is also true that she feels internally both disgust and disillusion for marriage and its functions, which convert her in her opinion primarily into an object of pleasure, which puts aside or into a secondary place the other possibilities and qualities which the Guajiro woman might possess, and, as in the case of the illicit relations mentioned above, she sees herself lowered /108/ from her standing of a free woman, of a rational human being. She feels that she has

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833 been deprived of her will and that she does not count as a person. For these reasons she regards her marital life as a hard duty to perform, at odds with her own personality. Possibly, for this reason, the man seeks out the mestizo, who is free of these prejudices and for that reason more capable to give and to derive for herself greater satisfaction from her marital life than the pure Indian woman.

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833 As it is not uncommon for a man to have two, three, or even more co-wives living together in one house, his conduct in his conjugal relations must be very circumspect if he wishes to preserve, at least in appearance, a cordial or friendly feeling among them, because if he is not circumspect, jealousies will spring up and a bitter struggle of lengthy repercussions ensue. As each one of the wives endeavors to find a motive that will justify her as superior in the eyes of the others, he has to behave with extreme caution. For this reason he sleeps outside in the enramada /bough-covered shelter/ while his women and their children sleep inside the house. He never suggests to any one of them that they should spend the night together, as the one thus favored would announce this preference to place herself on a superior plane. For this reason he receives whichever one goes voluntarily to him to his hammock.

834 The man suspends marital relations during the time the woman's pregnancy is advanced. He does this for fear of causing a miscarriage for which he might be blamed, and because of the belief that it might give rise to a bad delivery.

After the birth of the child, marital life is not resumed until the woman voluntarily asks for it.

842 Ideas about fecundation. The Guajiro knows that fecundation is the result of the combined action of the woman and the man through the means of the sexual act. They know that in this act the man gives an element which joined to the feminine one will form the new being. They say that the [826] woman has in her internal parts a special organ in which this new being will gradually take form, the womb, called in their

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593 others, if his wife does not control him, but may even attempt to take his own life. If for any reason the drunken man not accompanied by his wife should commit suicide, the blame for this act would be fixed on the wife as the indirect cause, since her neglect would be considered to have led to his death. Her duty is therefore to lead him away from such places where he is likely to get into trouble and, if she cannot succeed in this, not to leave him for an instant while there is a possibility of a fight. She should also obey him promptly and gratify him in all his whims. Guajiro women state that the Indian when drunk becomes quite childish and self-willed, and when he is in this condition he will even ask his wife to sing him to sleep, fuss over him, let him lie in her lap, or ask her to lie with him in his hammock, all of which she should do to please him. Others, on the contrary, become aggressive, and it is then they revive the insults they have had to suffer in the past. The woman should remain silent when he is in this mood so as to give him no cause for possible argument, which might make the man beat her in his fury. Neither should the woman reproach the man for whatever ill-treatment she may receive from him when in this condition, but she should wait until after he has slept and the drunkenness is past. Afterward, when he asks her what happened during his drunken bout, she has an opportunity to make her protests, which he will carefully listen to, excusing himself the best he can or repaying in some way the wrong he has done her -- for instance by presenting her with a new robe, if during his tantrums he has torn her other one, or making protestations of his love for her and excusing himself, saying that he was not responsible for what happened while in that drunken condition and she should take no notice of it. The woman after these explanations should not bear rancor.

595 With regard to polygamy the woman must assume an attitude of resignation, put no difficulties in the way of a new co-wife, and if she is taken to live in the same house try to avoid friction and quarrels, treating her in a sisterly fashion without /114/ being jealous of her or her husband. When

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co-wives live together they should be generous to one another, as if they were good comrades. In that way it is expected that they share the game the man brings back from the hunt, that they help each other when in need, that they not indulge in recriminations when the husband for some reason and for a time spends all his time with one, that they not ridicule each other in his presence, that they share the food that there is in the house, and that they look after the children in a motherly fashion. At the death of one, the others should go to the wake and show their grief. In short, they should adopt an attitude of mutual loyalty. These are the ideal responses their culture expects from the Guajiro woman confronted by the problems of polygamy. However, reality is very different. The woman prefers to have as co-wives friends whom she likes very much or, better still, her sisters, since in this way life is more supportable, and they can share the affection of their husband with a real sense of companionship.

The woman's conduct when her husband returns, even after a very long absence, should be of loving solicitude as if his absence did not matter; she should not ask why he was absent if the man does not explain, accept his excuses even when she knows them to be lies, should not be sarcastic nor mention other women nor say, for example: "How could you leave so-and-so's pretty face?" The woman should adopt this attitude because her husband may return, primed by the other woman to expect her displeasure, and finding her so different will disarm him. It is possible that the previous co-wife has said: "Your other wife is badly brought up. You are very good and should not live with her because she is haughty and disobedient. She does nothing but insult you because you love me. She envies me and does not respect you. I don't know why you let her say such annoying things." The passive and understanding attitude of the wife convinces the man of the falseness of all that he has previously heard, and on his return he says to her accuser: "What you told me is not true.

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595 She has received me lovingly and attentively. She didn't say anything about you." Sometimes the husband, wanting to ascertain what intrigues are going on, makes some comment about his favorite wife. The other should agree heartily and praise her. In such a case the husband will return to his favorite with the news: "My other wife is good. She said a lot of nice things about you. She likes you and is not envious." Nevertheless, the favorite will probably reply that she only spoke like that because she was afraid, and so a real struggle of intrigue goes on between the women, each one trying to monopolize all the husband's affection for herself. This is why the use of very expensive love charms is so general and why the complex /115/ of magic practices is used to keep a man's love. For although culturally it is not accepted, the attitude of each and every woman is one of permanent aggression. This obliges the Guajiro man, when not dealing with sisters, to keep his different wives separated as much as possible, for when chance brings them face to face, it is not unusual that they insult each other, passing from words to acts to the point of injuring each other. The hostility of one toward the other is heightened by the comments and bits of news that their friends bring about the behavior of the husband and what each one says about the other. These are brought with the idea of getting some kind of payment (it is customary to pay for information). The situation may get so tense that when the husband goes out the woman follows him to see where he goes, observes his tracks, and when she cannot follow him herself sends a child to watch him and tell her what happened.

When several co-wives live in the same house and do not get on, it is common for the struggle between them to reach the point of mutual destruction of personal property. When the husband gives a present to one, her most open enemy takes advantage of her absence to search everywhere for it and when she finds it to break it into pieces or burn it. At times this belligerent attitude is expressed in the presence of the husband, who has to resort to all his authority and

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515 even to force to separate the rivals as insults pass from words to acts.

When a man dies his relatives go to the house where the death occurred and begin the wake according to his standing. His wives attend and must show their grief and occupy the place appropriate to them as wives of the dead man, and must carry out the traditional practices of their cult for the dead.

The wife is not obliged to make common cause with the husband. However, at the present time cases have been seen in which the wife of an assassin has been burned or tortured, because she was included in the category of consanguineous relatives of the husband. But their culture establishes the principle that women do not participate in the men's fights.

513 Behavior of the man. Although the Guajiro woman always has the backing of her maternal relatives to counteract her husband's possible ill-treatment and although any such misbehavior on his part is illegal, women in general are not well treated, /a fact/ which many of them from various regions attribute to the problem of polygamy.

When a man has only one wife his life follows the cultural patterns, and he shows himself affectionate toward her, /116/ giving her and the children presents and voluntarily helping her to provide food and clothing. But when he buys another wife, the new one displaces the first one, who may be relegated to last place, although she keeps her social prestige as first wife through the economic and social backing of her family, which is considerable, and for this reason it is difficult for the husband to ill-treat her, so that the worst thing he can do is to abandon her.

He will abandon the other wives in turn, and they know it, but it sometimes happens that one of them attracts the attention of the man, and he abandons all the rest or makes them the victims of his constant ill-treatment.

This is what gives rise to the struggle of the woman against polygamy. She suffers and is bitterly resentful of her husband's marrying again. She thinks that it is because she no longer

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583 prefers to pardon her, but the offense he has received shows
837 itself at times in aggressive action and ill-treatment, for
which he is sorry later, as we have said.

When suspicion does not reach the proportions of reality, the married life of the couple is naturally less calm than it was. The husband tries to obtain proofs at all costs /118/ and lives a life of constant alertness, trying to induce his wife to confess and looking for an opportunity to catch her infraganti (for further explanation see the section Adultery in this chapter).

593 As a fifth cause of marital ill-treatment one may cite the woman's deficient compliance with the obligations she is supposed to undertake, which may result from two reasons: First, the husband may have paid a low price for her when he made the marriage payment arrangements; second, she may have been forced by her relatives to marry a man she did not like at a time when she was in love with another man. If the husband knows of this situation, he makes it a basis for his insults, refers to it as the palpable cause of her lack of attention to him and to the management of her home. He will say, for example: "You don't want to attend to me because I am not that so-and-so, whom you used to love so much. Of course you would be glad to serve and obey him in everything. But you will have to serve and attend to me, although you don't like it, because you are my wife and not his."

On occasion it is disobedience of the husband's prohibitive orders which lead to his attack. He tells his wife, for instance, not to leave the house, and she in spite of this leaves the house and goes visiting somewhere. Then the Guajiro, believing his rights are being flouted, punishes and mistreats the woman in order to force her to submit to his every wish, which is to him a symbol of his manhood.

595 Relations between co-wives. Life between the different wives of a man fluctuates between genuine comradeship and an infernal struggle.

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Generally, the cause of this struggle is jealousy and the consequences of every kind that follow in its train. The women say: "Before he found this other woman, he came home with pleasure, brought us presents, liked being in our company, and never found any reason to quarrel. Now everything has changed. He never comes, or if he does he always looks for a pretext to mistreat us and insult us. He comes home drunk, looking for any reason he can find to get mad. He never brings us anything, not even the fruit of what he has sown even though we know that he has some. It is the other woman who will not let him be good to us and tells him tales to get him away from us."

Working on this principle and on the fact that a new marriage puts the previous wife on a secondary plane in her husband's estimation, the woman struggles desperately to keep her position with her husband, /119/ because once it is lost, she knows that she will have no legal backing to make him comply with his obligations.

She then follows two general norms of conduct: one is open and ostensible and is manifested by insults in word and act to her rival (Cf. Behavior of the woman... in this same chapter), by gossip, and even personal attack when they meet by chance. When they live under the same roof, the husband's presence is no obstacle to the showing of aggressiveness. Some get their close relatives, a child for example, to spy on the rival's conduct to have some means by which they can attack her, or they use their friends (whom they afterward have to pay) to investigate all that she does or does not do, with the same purpose. When the husband leaves the house, she spies on him to find out if he visits her rival and to ascertain what goes on.

The struggle at times is not open only against the rival co-wife but goes further and is directed openly against the husband. She complies with her wifely obligations to him and to the customary norms of hospitality halfheartedly; she

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595 receives him ungraciously when he arrives, without rising from where she is to hang his hammock; she does not offer him refreshing drinks or coffee, and when he asks her to do something for him she replies: "Why don't you ask that so-and-so, whom you like so much and who is so prudent? What do you see in her who is nothing to admire, who doesn't know how to do such-and-such things, that you should be so silly about her and can see nothing except through her eyes and can believe nothing except the lies she tells you? She is a shameless hussy who goes about laughing with all the men, who doesn't know how to work, and you love her anyway. I am going to do the same so that you care for me."

She also answers his questions rudely, answers him with monosyllables, or pretends not to know what she really knows quite well. This conduct may exasperate the husband, who tries to reassert his authority in the home, resorting to insults and blows, especially if he is drunk and the scene has been repeated many times. On other occasions he tries to calm her and openly denies his affection for the rival in question, overlooking his wife's conduct and promising her presents and that he will stay with her a long time.

This aggressiveness is adopted not only against the legal co-wives but also against all women who try in an illegal way to usurp the affection of the husband. Against these, the wife's reaction is openly aggressive, because in the majority of cases such women are generally at the bottom of the social scale, either because they are slaves or bond servants or belong to an unimportant group. A story is told of a Guajiro woman of /120/ high class who, learning for herself of marital relations between her husband and one of her sisters, attacked the latter with a knife, obliging her to flee during the night and not permitting her to live anywhere near the wife's home. Others turn out their women slaves after beating them cruelly and present the husband with a claim for compensation payment when the slaves are personal property /of the woman/. They

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515 follow the same line of conduct with regard to the bond servants who serve their husbands as concubines. However, this legal action is not always taken, and the wife may overlook the whole affair.

When a wife feels despised or mistreated by her husband and put in an inferior position by a co-wife, it is not unusual for her to wish to kill her husband and actually to carry out this desire. The Guajiro, who knows this sentiment, appeals to it when there is a fight going on between two clan groups, by paying the woman whom he knows is unhappily married to kill her husband. At his suggestion, she gives her husband algodonillo /? algodoncillo, a milkweed/ poison in his coffee, ground-up glass beads, poison for jaguars /tigres/, or puts the juice of a small, very poisonous lizard into the rum her husband is accustomed to drink. This practice is so well known that men, during war time, do not go to their wives' houses.

The other norm of conduct followed by the wife in such cases is a passive one: She does everything possible to condition her conduct as a married woman to the idealized cultural patterns in order to try to retain the affection of her husband to the utmost and thus prevent new women taking her place. If the husband is not completely satisfied in spite of these efforts, the woman tries to please him sexually. She believes that if she attains this objective, her matrimonial security is assured. That is why, besides doing everything they can to obtain such a satisfaction, they have recourse to magic, as we have explained several times in this work.

Finally, the woman may adopt an attitude of indifference to her husband, without any claims or anxiety, taking his lack of affection as the most natural thing in the world, in this way trying to bring about his return; or she may praise her rival when her husband mentions her in order to give the lie to any accusation that the other woman may have made. (Cf. in this chapter, Behavior of the woman with her husband).

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Another way of carrying on the struggle is to exaggerate the usual norms of hospitality. She tries to please him with food, with solicitous attention on arrival, hanging his hammock, bringing him coffee, bringing him water to wash with, etc., in short pleasing him in every way possible. She suppresses /121/ all recrimination that might anger him, all allusion, veiled or open, and all reproaches at his conduct, since she believes that the man will consequently rectify, analyze, and weigh his conduct and decide that she is better than the others. If she does not succeed in keeping his affection by this, at least she knows that she will not be mistreated. In any case, she is convinced that in the long run she will have to resign herself to the presence of other women, in other words, to polygamy.

In her struggle to keep uppermost in her husband's affections, the woman also resorts to birth control to conserve her physical attractiveness, as we have seen in the section Sexual life in this chapter, or gets her husband to buy her friends as wives, especially her younger sisters, because in both cases she will find in the co-wives companions and mutual aid. And the Guajiro, who does not like quarrels between his wives is willing to do this.

We must consider the norms of conduct for the woman confronted with this problem. Guajiro culture expects that the wife, the first one as well as the rest, should take the husband's new marriages with resignation, without opposing his wish, and, above all, without attempting future reprisals against him and his new companion. She should content herself with the husband's assurances that her predominant position as first wife will never be lost and that he has had to buy the others because the previous ones had not been able to satisfy his needs or his love. It also expects that new wives will not try to sow discord in the group and will not exert a pernicious influence, trying to inspire dislike for the rest in the mind of the husband. Also, it expects that she will submit to the wishes of her husband, who has the option of taking her to live with the others.

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595 In such a case, she must reconcile herself to the situation and lead a harmonious life of true friendship with her companions, without showing her influence, or setting one against another, and especially not setting her husband against one or another of the co-wives. On their part, those who are already present should offer a benevolent welcome to the new wife, respect her property, and share with her the common goods and rights.

The man in particular and the social collectivity in general expect the woman who lives in polygamy not to feel jealous, or at least not to show it ostensibly. A home consisting of several wives living in continual discord is a spectacle degrading to the husband, since the other men consider it an undesirable problem, and they throw up at the husband his lack of skill in managing his wives properly, thus lowering his prestige /122/ by involving him in gossip which the society relays avidly for their amusement.

The society believes that a woman who feels herself lowered by her husband or by a co-wife should maintain a resigned attitude. They concede that she may use passive means, but she must not have recourse to open struggle against the favorite to regain the affection of the husband.

The wife's duty to satisfy her husband sexually presents difficulties to the co-wives when all live under the same roof. The woman may have access to the husband in normal times when she desires it or he demands it by going to the enramada /bough-covered shelter/ where he sleeps, if one of her companions has not gone there first. The husband must not express preference at such a time for anyone, nor leave one unsatisfied to go with another, because this is the most common cause of jealousy. In spite of this, on occasion the favorite wife takes over the fulfillment of this obligation almost exclusively, when the others are very seldom visited by the husband.

Their culture also demands of the man's various wives that they maintain a relationship of cordiality and mutual help (Cf. Behavior of the woman with the husband) and that they

/122 cont./

595 become co-participants in the husband's goods and what he takes to one of the houses. When they live together in the same house, the children of any one of them should be looked after by the rest in the mother's absence, and all food should be shared, when one of them has none.

Generally, each of the wives has part of the objects of the husband's personal use -- the robe, the guayuco, the belts, the sandals, the arms, the hammock -- and when he asks for them, each one should answer with her part: the goods he brings belong to all the women, and with them they attend to their personal necessities, those of the children, and those of possible visitors.

The co-wives must share together in each others' difficulties. It is not at all well regarded that one should rejoice at the suffering of another, even though she be the most hated rival. Nobody must show their pleasure at this. If the husband's marital preference changes, the other women must not comment sarcastically on his inconstancy. The favorite -- so Guajiro culture considers -- should have sufficient kindness to try to level out the conduct of the husband and intercede for the less favored ones, asking for benevolence or help according to the needs of each. However, in reality this does not happen. The favorite tries to eliminate the others and vice versa, openly or under cover, /123/ unless the co-wives are bound to her by ties of consanguinity or by previous friendship.

When one of the co-wives dies, if her companions are noble and have good feelings, they must go to the ceremonies which take place at such a time and express their regrets to the relatives. If they do not comply with this basic act of courtesy, not only do the relatives of the dead woman resent it, but it gives occasion to bitter remarks from the rest, who accuse them of bad feeling.

The first wife, even if she finds herself definitely abandoned by her husband, who is now attracted to one of the later wives, does not lose her legally predominant social position.

/123 cont./

595 He has the best livestock on her land; it is she who is really considered as his main wife, who represents him in rank, and whose children belong to a higher group than the rest. And it is to her home and not to that of any of his other wives that the Guajiro takes his friends when he owes them some attention, if they are people of a status equal or superior to his own.

She adopts an attitude of simulated indifference before society with regard to the polygamy of her husband. She does not comment on the matter or associate with the others, although in the lower classes she is frequently obliged to live with them, in which case she will tenaciously defend her privileges.

Also, the Guajiro man at the present time marries by the Catholic rite but later contracts other marriages under the Guajiro system. In these cases it is not unusual for the first wife to be unaware of his subsequent marriage, since the husband hides it, but she may also get to hear of it because of the general practice of selling information among some women. In such a situation she maintains a reserved attitude before outsiders, and although she really recognizes the importance of such acts, she behaves as though her husband's later marriage means nothing in her life; she considers such things as misdoings on her husband's part and regards other wives, even those legally bought, as concubines and their children as having the illegitimate standing they would have in our society.

As the acquisition of each new wife may bother the previous ones, he does not insist that they attend the marriage ceremony, unless they are pleased about it because the new wife is an intimate friend or a sister.

837
[84] Adultery. We have seen in this chapter that the man's first reaction to knowledge of his wife's adultery is to kill /124/ her lover and bring on all the consequences this death may entail or, as an alternative, to demand indemnification from his wife's maternal relatives for the offense suffered. However, when the man cares very much for his wife, he may forgive her after a terrible quarrel. It can happen that she may go away for some time with another man, and her husband will later live with her

[29 Cont.]

*756 When the woman becomes pregnant, the spirit puts up with
833 the situation without getting angry, but it does not show any such
834 patience if she delays a length of time in the sexual act with her
husband, or if she sleeps by his side throughout the night.

The female shaman's obligation, in the sexual aspect, goes
to the length of forcing her to be but a passive entity during
coitus, not permitting her body the slightest motion and also not
permitting any endearments from her husband before the sexual
[787] act. When these dispositions are disobeyed, the shaman finds
herself suffering during the night from especially terrifying and
horrible dreams which fill her with fears and anxieties.

*756 The man who marries a shaman gets to understand his
693 wife's situation, and for this reason he is prudent in his actions:
He does not demand anything but the strictly indispensable, and
he is in accord with her in all matters related to her special
state. [30]

*756 But in spite of all these prohibitions, the female shaman
176 who becomes pregnant receives aid from the spirit at the time
844 of giving birth. This assistance consists of an easy delivery of
her baby and of counsel her spirit gives her on the simplest form
of giving birth, the remedies she should take, etc.

*756 The shaman must not perform ceremonial acts of curing
841 when she is in her menstrual period because the patient will be-
843 come worse instead of improving. However, pregnancy does
not present any obstacle to her activities and she may accom-
plish cures during the entire period of gestation.

*756 In the case of a male shaman, the spirit permits him to be
834 with his wife, but for a very short time; he is also allowed, as
[595] are the rest of the Guajiro, to have several wives.

• In summary, women shamans must cohabit exclusively
with their husbands, avoiding all endearments, movements, the
prolongation of coitus, and pregnancy. They may not exercise
their functions during their menstrual periods. The male shaman
also must be moderate in the sexual aspect and limit himself to
his wife, or wives, as the case may be.

*756 The food taboo is limited to prohibiting the shaman from
262 eating the flesh of such animals as he has received in payment

[155 cont.]

182 individual or of the dead, in the aspect which we have called
626 "Omens and Augural Birds," in the behavior followed by individ-
789 uals who wish to call up a breeze during a windless calm at sea
or to send away eclipses and lightning which, according to their
belief, are malevolent.

• • •

789 A very interesting aspect of magic is its use for and against
595 some of the cultural institutions and their institutionalized pat-
terns; for example, the use of love charms and the compliance
• with certain norms after the period of seclusion accompanying
the ceremonies at the time of a young woman's initiation. Her
aim is to fight against polygamy, with a view either to obtain-
ing predominance over other wives or, better, to prevent the man
who has acquired her for his wife from acquiring more women with
whom she would have to share his life. Possibly due to the influ-
[177] ence of acculturation, there is a tendency toward monogamy on
the part of the women. The men, however, tend toward polygamy
[654] for prestige, since for it they must have a good economical posi-
tion, as the price of women is high, increasingly so the greater
their social position.

751 [156] Another institution that we see directly affected by
771 magic is this same initiation of young women. We saw how
881 the death of a first-born child required a series of ceremonies
to prevent future children dying at birth, one after the other,
and we stated that one of the principal ceremonies consisted in
the observance of certain norms which bring to mind very clearly
the initiation of the young mother. Their idea would seem to
[261] be that one of the causes of the death of the first-born was the
deficient carrying out of the magic-biological-social ceremonial
to which the girl must submit to prepare for her life as an adult.

764 Also the norms relating to the dead and the belief in a
775 life beyond the grave rest almost exclusively on magic, and
771 through it their prestige and their functioning are kept up. Magic
626 is also the cause of the fear and respect which relatives and friends
show to their dead, and it is magic which also promotes all the
ceremonial rites that are celebrated in this connection.

582 As for the sanctioned forms of cousin marriage, Ego (m. and f.) may marry any cousins on either side except for mother's sister's children. Ego (m. and f.) may also marry any kinsman of the third degree with the exception of a mother's sister's daughter's child. All relatives of the fourth degree are potential spouses.

[595] Polygyny is practiced and is definitely a mark of status and rank. Sororate is sanctioned although it very rarely occurs. The data indicate, then, a very typical system of Crow type.

602 No avoidance taboos were said to exist in Goajiro society, but great attention is paid to respectful behavior between kinsmen. In the family parents are respected [593] equally highly by the children, whereas among siblings the brother enjoys greater authority than his sisters, and an elder than a younger brother. In the presence of the maternal uncle nobody is supposed to speak up unquestioned; this rule applies especially to the younger people. Grandparents maintain close and friendly relations with their grandchildren. They make gifts to the latter: horses, bows and [431] arrows, drums, rifles, etc., and the grandchildren assist the old after having grown up. The father-in-law is respected greatly by his daughter-in-law. When visiting she serves him before she serves her mother-in-law. She does not, however, attend her own mother. Cousins are completely free to meet without being obliged to observe any avoidance regulations.

608 Artificial kin relations were said to be mixing altogether among the Goajiro. Non-relatives are treated with great friendliness and may even be accepted as 609 step-parents of an orphan of the group. Orphans usually join a family on the 597 father's side.

CABACA, VAREZUBA

TORTS AMONG THE GUAJIROS

155

the men speak some Spanish in addition to their native language. Some of them know how to read and write. They are almost entirely pastoral, possessing great herds of horses, asses, sheep, goats, and cattle. They have borrowed a great deal from the Europeans but they have also kept their own culture to a remarkable degree. As usual, native elements are most strongly present in the non-material phases of culture. Unfortunately they are not united or organized into a modern state, though against all foreigners they stand together as a unit. Authority is acquired by certain caciques through their wealth and membership in the 'casta,' the major social grouping in Guajiro society. Each casta claims a mythological origin and holds sovereignty over a well-defined territory. Many of these castas or social groupings are further subdivided. Each casta has its caciques whose function is chiefly to settle disputes and whose position is inherited, matrilineally. The oldest of them is allowed more authority, but generally it is the wealthiest man, and the one who can marshal more retainers, armed with rifles and revolvers, who is listened to with greater respect. There are further divisions in Guajiro society. At the top are the caciques and their families who are rich and powerful. The next group is composed of peons or retainers in the service of the upper stratum, and at the bottom are the 'slaves' who have been born in that condition or have been enslaved following an offense to some powerful group, and who can even be let out to work for planters in the sugar fields of Zulia. The life of the poor people has not changed much since early times. Polygamy is widely practised, as is also concubinage, by the wealthier men. Each wife lives in her own rancho and there awaits the occasional visit of her husband. The children inherit property and social affiliations through the mother. Disputes that arise within a casta are settled by arbiters chosen by the families of the litigants. Disputes inter-casta may be settled by arbitration if violence is not desirable. Generally the killing of an individual gives rise to armed action with an eventual composition by payment.

My informants attempted to demonstrate the difference be-

881 invitation. Again cattle are butchered, and there is drinking
 584 and dancing and horse-racing. Numbers of men come to see
 if they would like to put themselves forward as suitors. The
 more eminent guests are received in the house itself, and the
 girl is now present. Her shorn hair has grown and been
 trimmed to a page-boy cut, and she wears her best clothes
 and new ornaments. She hides her hair clippings carefully
 in a bag, for she does not want to risk anyone getting hold
 of them and using them to acquire power over her by the
 arts of magic. Later, she will secretly bury them under a
 cow pat. That will help to increase her herds. The droppings
 of various animals play a great part in the magic of the
 789 Guajiro, and it would seem that there is negro influence
 514 here as well.

881 The girl has now been born again—she is a new person, a
 woman. She knows all that an adult woman needs to know
 and can do everything that a wife and mother should be
 able to do. Pale and lovely, she steps out into life once more
 and inquisitive young men swarm round her. The rich
 give a big feast, the poor provide simpler fare, but it is
 always a great occasion.

582 A Guajiro man will never marry a girl before she has
 undergone this period of confinement, which means that
 people seldom marry too early. It is said that in the old days
 595 rich old men with several wives sometimes bought little
 831 poor girls as concubines, believing that that would enhance
 their virility.

The girl's long segregation is intended to protect her
 from the supernatural dangers that are thought to threaten
 her, especially during this sensitive period of transition from
 childhood to womanhood. The girl can also be dangerous
 to others through being exposed to attack by spirits. It is
 only practical that during this period she should practise
 handicrafts.

252 Going back to the house, we found the women at the
 fires, which there were protected by special small cactus
 354 screens. There was no need to have them under a roof at
 that time of the year, only to shelter them from the wind.
 The pots stood over the fire supported on three stones.

LAWS WITH NO TABLETS

97

riage. A Guajiro woman has no right to sell her body. The law does not recognize prostitution. 562
[542]

A married woman's relatives and clan do not leave her entirely in her husband's hands. He may not do as he likes with her, nor cause her suffering. Suffering and discomfort she is bound to experience in childbirth, however, and of that he is the primary cause; thus whether as a result of legal or illegal relations, the man must compensate the mother for her confinement by giving her family a few cattle. The woman herself may not eat their meat under any circumstances. 562
614
844
[431]

Originally the Guajiro clans were exogamous; members were not allowed to marry within the clan. That is no longer insisted upon, but not only brothers and sisters, but maternal males and cousins on the mother's side, are still reckoned among the forbidden degrees. It is unthinkable that an Indian girl should marry her maternal uncle; that would be like having her father for her husband. It once happened that an uncle and niece had a secret relationship and the girl became pregnant. A monk married them, but the Indians regarded the relationship as a heinous crime and the whole district reacted so violently that the couple had to leave the peninsula and go far away, where there was no risk of meeting members of their tribe. 582
614
835
[626]

There is nothing to prevent an Indian getting himself several wives. Infrequently white men have married into Guajiro families and they too have had to pay a bride-price. A number of poor Creoles have contracted Guajiro marriages with poor girls. I have already mentioned how foreign oil workers made Guajiro marriages. In those early days there were no arrangements made for employees' families, and the Guajiro girls suited those primitive conditions very well, though as a rule such marriages with Indian girls were very short-lived, as those of the Creoles with them still are. The girl is soon abandoned, if that can be done without risk, the girl's family in such cases being powerless. So the Indians told me. [595]
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582

The monks had already told us that where Creoles had married Guajiro girls of good family, those marriages had

INNOCENCE AND THE FERTILITY DANCE 107

later, for he has been brought up always to try and make things right. 593

During her period of isolation a girl also learns how to satisfy her husband erotically and always to be ready, when he is excited. To retain his love she may employ magic as well as her own natural powers of attraction. Knowing that a woman loses some of her looks and attraction during pregnancy, wives often try, after having had several children, to hinder fertilization by taking certain herbal drugs and by magical means. 881
864
[832]
[842]

'Polygamy is permitted, is it not, Mauana?' 595

'Yes, a man can take several wives. As long as he pays the bride-price, no one can say anything, but her family would never allow a better-class girl to become the second wife of anyone. And you see, custom decrees that a Guajiro wife, whether the first or a concubine, must acquiesce if the husband takes a new wife. Similarly, it is considered that wives ought to live in peace and friendship. They must receive a new concubine cordially and all show their best side to the husband. They must help each other to watch the children and not display jealousy if the husband prefers one to the others.'

'That is how it should be, but the reality is quite different. Very often the wives live in the same house, which naturally leads to conflict more easily than when each has her own hut. Jealousy or envy are common in these harems. Enmity and quarrelling are not infrequent, nor is actual fighting. The wives spy upon each other, destroy each other's things and make all sorts of scenes. One or other perhaps comes to hate the husband. It is said that a certain man, who shall be nameless, had noticed something of the sort and did not dare to be at home while a family feud lasted. An enemy could have bribed one of his wives to put poison in his maize beer.'

'That does not sound pleasant!'

'No, polygamy undoubtedly has its drawbacks!' Mauana agreed. 'I myself have only one wife, but several bed slaves,' he added with an artful look in his eye.

Even though all a man's marriages are considered legal,

- 515 the first wife retains a privileged position. She will be of the best family and the highest in rank. She is the hostess.

838 One day, when I was standing talking with Mauana, he pointed to a couple walking past and said eagerly:

'You should picture those with your apparatus.'

[822] I photographed the two, who to me appeared very ordinary. The woman had her cheeks and nose painted red. Mauana whispered to me that the woman was not a woman, but that they were two men living together. Later we came across several Indian men who did women's work and wore women's dress. This was not considered really right, but it was looked upon with indulgence. In the early days of discovery gold coins were found on the coast by Santa Marta which depicted 'shameful acts contrary to Nature'. Among the Guajiros' relatives in the West Indies there were chiefs who had whole harems of boys.

684 'We were talking of bride-price and buying women slaves,' said I, to revert to more normal things. 'What does a poor youth do, who possesses nothing?'

[833] Everyone agreed that it was a pity about any such. The law had definite regulations for intercourse between man and woman, and any infringement involved a claim for damages. If anyone seduced a woman, he must pay considerable compensation to her relatives, however willing she may have been; but if he took her against her will, it costs him considerably more. A poor man cannot pay and therefore risks losing his life as a punishment. The Indians admitted that here and there on the border there was prostitution, but it was mostly mestizo women who lent themselves to that. In Guajira proper, there were no prostitutes. Both the chiefs and the monks told us that. Thus in the interior, a young man without means must live a life of abstinence. The time when the dances of the kid were performed would be his only opportunity of enjoying a woman's favours, provided he could find a willing partner. At this time the otherwise strict code is suspended and free love permitted.

796 Mauana had promised to arrange a dance, but of another kind. The dances of the kid are performed during the rainy

378

SOUTH AMERICAN INDIANS

[B.A.E. Bull. 148]

- 622 Chiefs are polygynous and have many daughters, for
 595 whom very high bride prices are paid—sometimes thousands of animals,
 583 worth \$6,000 to \$10,000. Such rich chiefs take great pride in their
 556 daughters, dressing them in fine silken robes and necklaces of gold and
 pearls and providing them with personal servants.
- 567 There is a class of slaves who are beneath the chiefs' retainers in the
 social hierarchy. It consists of people born into this status and of captives.

PROPERTY

- 422 All cattle, though individually owned, belong in theory to the local
 group as a whole and are worked for the common benefit of all. For
 example, the cattle paid as a bride price when a girl marries within her
 own sib go to a new owner, but the milk, butter, cheese, and hides from
 them continue to be shared by everyone in the sib. When a woman
 receives cattle as a bride price for her daughter any new stock born to
 them belongs to the daughter's husband and his sons, and when the
 animals are rounded up for the annual branding each son is allowed to
 brand a certain number of them.

ETIQUETTE

- 576 The Goajiro are in general unfriendly to strangers but have a well-
 574 established code of hospitality. Strangers calling at a house must wait
 until invited in. Inside a house a bowl of chicha or rum (coffee when
 available) is the first gift offered the visitor, who is thereafter given a
 hammock and treated as a member of the family. A special feast may
 [565] be arranged if there are many guests. A guest of high rank is feasted,
 and some of the young girls of the house may be placed at his disposal.

LAW AND ORDER

- 627 The chiefs have little power outside their own local group, where they
 settle minor disputes. The solution of many disputes and transgressions
 of custom are left to the parties concerned. The laws of group respon-
 628 sibility and group retaliation lead to frequent intertribal feuds. A person
 614 without a strong sib to protect him is helpless, for others may use any
 act which may conceivably be interpreted as harmful as pretext for
 demanding indemnity. For example, a person injured while intoxicated
 may demand payment from the person who sold him the rum, or a person
 injured by a borrowed animal may demand payment from the owner of
 the animal; a thief who hurts himself when trespassing on the property
 of his intended victim will demand compensation of him; and anyone
 aiding a sick or wounded person who subsequently dies incurs a liability.
- 672 If a person injures himself he must make an expiatory gift to the
 members of his own sib and a lesser gift to his father's relatives. If a
 child dies when under the care of one parent, this parent must reimburse

water but is given an herbal purgative. Her hair is cut short. Generally several of her relatives stay around the door of the hut, and strangers and men with an eye to matrimony may look in. During this period the girl is taught the duties of married life and such skills as weaving, sewing, and making hammocks. When she emerges, stout and bleached, a special festival is held, when she resumes her ornaments and puts on the adult clothes that she has made during her confinement. She is now considered marriageable. The length of her confinement depends on her status, though theoretically it lasts until her hair again reaches the nape of her neck. Poor girls are secluded only a few weeks, rich girls up to 2 years.

Sexual life and marriage.—Little is known about the sexual life of the Goajiro. A certain amount of promiscuous love making occurs among the young people at the biweekly festivals. Dances also provide an opportunity for sexual advances.

There are some male transvestites who carry on only female activities and are ridiculed by the men.

When a man desires to marry he sends his father or uncle as intermediary, then pays a bride price which has been set by the girl's relatives. The payment is usually in cattle, but goats, pearls, liquor, cotton cloth, and gold ornaments also are used. The father retains the purchase price only when his first daughter marries; the income of subsequent marriages goes to the girl's senior maternal uncles. The mother also receives part of the income. A son obtains the cattle for the bride payment from the increase of his father's herds.

Intermarriage between the alba is frequent, and many of the Goajiro give their daughters to "civilizados" from Maracaibo and Río Hacha, who pay higher prices and find such a tie with the Indians useful in their trading relations.

The marriage ceremony consists of a series of feasts and exchanges presents between the two families. The wedding night is spent at the ranchería of the bride's mother, but the nuptial hammock (specially woven by the female relatives of the bride) is hung from a tree some distance away from the house. For a period of days and even months the bridegroom leaves his bride at dawn and returns only after sunset. In this way the groom shows respect to his mother-in-law.

Polygyny is general. The number of wives depends on the economic status of the husband, some men having as many as 20. Each wife lives in her own house, where her husband occasionally visits her. The man, as head of the polygynous household, supervises the daily slaughter of animals and the distribution of meat and corn to each household according to the number of its members.

If a wife shirks her domestic duties she may be divorced and her husband may claim the return of the bride price cattle, plus their increase and

231 The whole judiciary structure with its elaborate system of torts
556 is based on the payment of a given number of domestic animals.

681 There is no crime, including murder, that cannot be amiably
settled by such payments (Petrullo, 1937). The acquisition of
[585] a bride is also reduced to the payment of a stipulated price, in
terms of domestic animals, to be given to the maternal uncle of
the girl.

231 Social, economic, and political status in the Guajiro society
554 is intimately connected with the cattle complex. To have a high
status an individual needs, primarily, two assets: he must possess
a large number of domestic animals, in other words, he must
be considered rich; and he must be an older man. If he lacks
either of these requisites, he is not a leader, as he will not be
sufficiently respected nor will members of his clan come to him
to seek his advice. Consequently, leaders are not numerous in
the Guajiro peninsula. The present writer knows only two
individuals, both in Venezuela, who are today the unquestionable
159 leaders of their respective clans. These men are Panchito Silva,
554 of the Pushaina clan, and José de la Rosa Fernandez of the
556 Uriana clan.

602 An analysis of the lives of these two men will be illustrative
of the traditional methods of acquiring status among the Guajiro.

Panchito Silva, a man of about 80 years of age, lives in the
• [595] native village of Sishipes in Venezuela. During his life-time he
has had eight wives (two or three at a time) and now lives
with his surviving two, one about 35 years old and the other
about 50. He is a full-blooded Indian as has been the case of
his wives. There is no trace of race mixture in his family. He
has no clear idea of how many children he has had, apart from
those living with him now (two men and five women). Yet he
knows definitely that he has four younger brothers—who will
inherit his wealth and position before these are passed on to his
nephews—three sisters and twenty-five nephews and nieces (all
[609] sons and daughters of his sisters). His lack of concern towards
his own children coupled with his keen interest in his nephews
and nieces seems to be a clear indication of how strong the
avunculate is in traditional Guajiro society. His holdings in
cattle and other domestic animals are very large. Roughly he
owns around 1,000 head of cattle and about 3,000 of sheep,

159 office expired (in two years time) he sought and obtained a
554 position in the Federal Ministry of Public Works in a project which was seeking the best places to drill water wells all over the Guajira peninsula. He held this job for about a year and half. He is now employed in the Guajira office, in Paraguaipoa, of the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry and is "ad honorem" agent of the Comisión Indigenista in the Guajira. In these two jobs he gets paid only when he performs certain work, such as when he recently acted as guide and interpreter for the present writer.

159 During his term as Prefect of Paez (Sinamaica) he married,
554 according to the Guajira tradition and law, one of the daughters
583 of To'olito Fernandez, for whom he had to pay a very high
614 price, as the girl was the daughter of an important chief. Fol-
585 lowing Guajira law the price for the bride was gathered among the members of the Uriana clan to which Perez belongs due to his mother's heritage. Incidentally, as Fernandez also belongs to the Uriana clan he had to contribute in the collection of the bride-price of his own daughter although, of course, the amount collected did not go to him but to the girl's maternal uncle. This was a typical exogamous marriage as the girl belongs to the Guajariyú clan, that being her mother's clan. At present, Perez keeps two households, one in Maracaibo with his white wife and son, whom he visits once or twice a week, if he is not doing any special work for the ministries; the other, is his native household at the Laguna del Pajaro, Guajira, where he remains most of his time. He has had no children with his Indian wife. His two simultaneous marriages have brought him no trouble with the law, as according to Guajiro tradition polygyny is perfectly acceptable, and according to Venezuelan law he has only one legitimate wife.

159 It is interesting to note at this point that Perez denies having
595 a white wife in Maracaibo, although he does not deny having the son and shows pride in saying that his son is in medical school. The present writer was not able to fathom the reasons behind this denial. Data regarding his Maracaibo marriage was obtained from Perez's father who was also unable to furnish good motives for the fact that Perez tries to hide that he has a household in that city. To test this point the writer, after the

ACQUIRING STATUS IN GUAJIRO SOCIETY 123

two days' visit at the home of Panchito Silva and while returning to Paraguaipoa, asked Perez how many wives he had had. Perez was obviously quite upset by the question, but did not hesitate in answering: "Oh, no, Mr. Santa Cruz! I have and only have had one wife, Anita!" (Anita is his Indian wife). Whether the motives for the denial are of a personal nature or involve some cultural complex is unknown to the writer. 159 595

Nevertheless Perez leads a perfectly discernable dual life. He has two homes, as described, dividing his time between them, devoting about 40% of the time (when he is not working) to his Maracaibo home, and about 60% to his Guajira home. He has two sets of friends which he is very careful not to mix. His plans for the future of his son are entirely along white cultural lines. At this point we find contradictory thoughts in Perez's mind. The present writer has heard him repeatedly criticize the attitude of certain Guajiros, both full-blooded and half-breeds, who, having gone to Maracaibo for formal education (especially to Teachers' College) have then sought, and in many cases obtained, positions in Maracaibo instead of returning to the Guajira to practice their professions. Yet when it comes to his own son, Perez's plans are for a permanent residence in Maracaibo or, if possible, Caracas, where he could go into practice in an entirely white cultural background.

The problem now is to define Perez's status in the Guajira. Undoubtedly his personality has some importance in Guajiro social stratification, especially among his own generation. This importance he has attained by granting favors, which his semi-official government positions enables him to do, to those whom he thinks will, in the future, be of help to him. Perhaps this is best illustrated by an example. The Ministry of Justice, through the Comisión Indigenista, grants ten scholarships annually to Guajiros who meet certain educational requirements. These scholarships are for the State of Zulia Teachers' College in Maracaibo. Perez has been given, more or less, a free hand in the selection of the candidates for these scholarships. About 65% of the candidates chosen by Perez, in the four years that the plan has been in operation, have been admitted to the College. The writer was able to look briefly into the family back- 622 557 658